

# Resource Conservation & Development in Texas



Helping others help  
themselves.

Texas Association of RC&D Councils

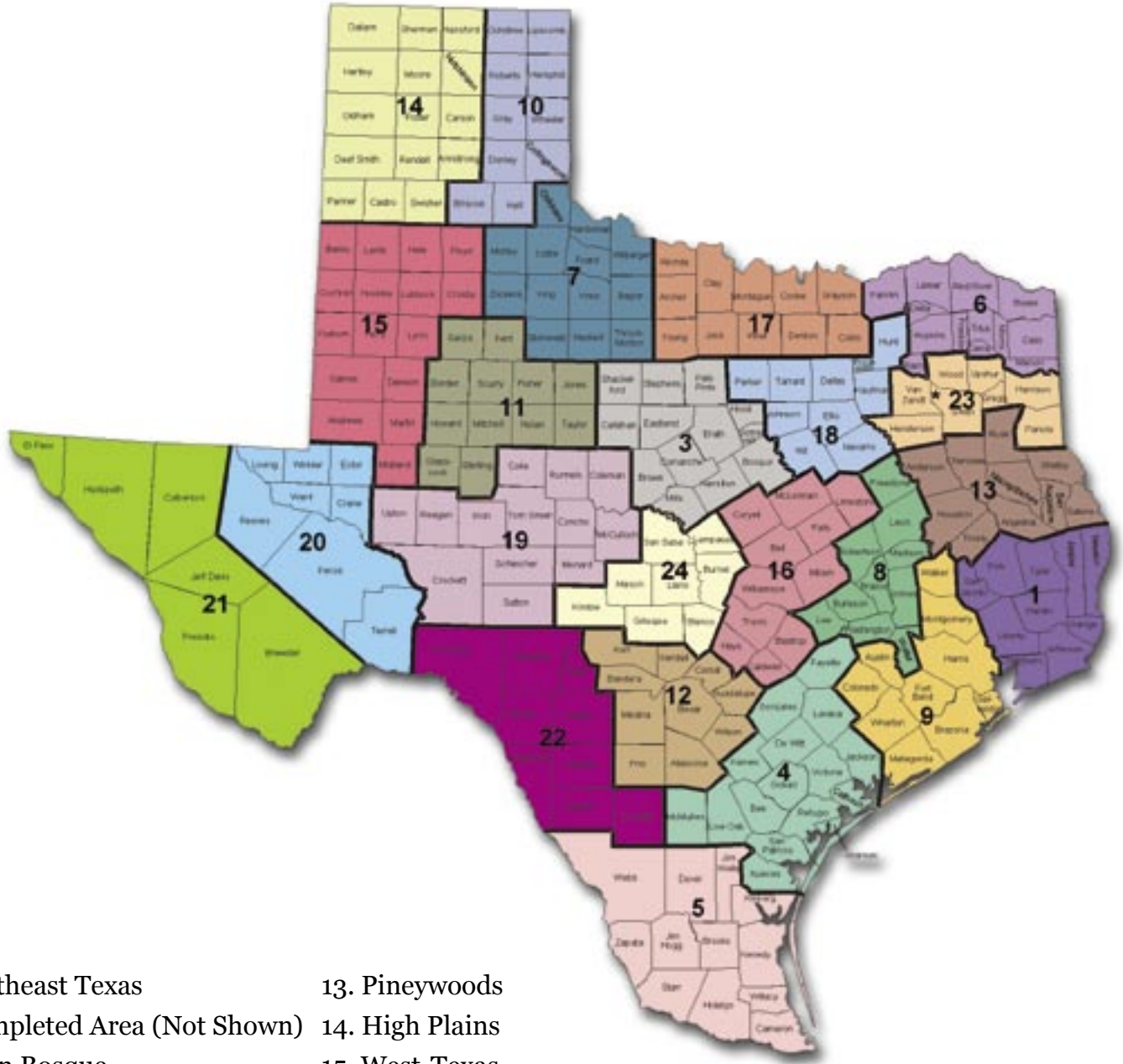


United States Department of Agriculture  
 **NRCS**  
Natural Resources Conservation Service





# Texas RC&D Areas



- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Southeast Texas            | 13. Pineywoods                          |
| 2. Completed Area (Not Shown) | 14. High Plains                         |
| 3. Leon Bosque                | 15. West-Texas                          |
| 4. De-Go-La                   | 16. Central Texas                       |
| 5. Rio Bravo                  | 17. Chisholm Trail                      |
| 6. Northeast Texas            | 18. Bluebonnet                          |
| 7. Four Winds                 | 19. Concho Valley                       |
| 8. Big 8                      | 20. Pecos Valley                        |
| 9. Sam Houston                | 21. Chihuahuan Desert                   |
| 10. North Rolling Plains      | 22. Rio Grande-Nueces                   |
| 11. Big Country               | 23. Sabine-Neches (Application Pending) |
| 12. Alamo                     | 24. Hill Country                        |

# Texas Association of RC&D Councils

## Helping Others Help Themselves.

### What is RC&D?

Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) is a unique program, led by local volunteer councils, that helps people care for and protect natural resources in a way that improves the local economy, environment, and living standards. RC&D is a way for people to work together to plan and carry out activities that will make their areas better places to live.

### Empowering Local Citizens

RC&D is based on the assumption that local citizens, with assistance, can develop and carry out action-oriented plans for the social, economic, and environmental enrichment of rural communities.



*RC&D councils work to bring action-oriented assistance to rural communities. Projects such as computer training help enrich lives and improve rural economies.*

### The Purpose

The purpose of RC&D is to promote conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources; to improve the general level of economic activity; and to enhance the environment and standard of living in rural communities. The aim is to provide a system of development, encourage the wise use of natural resources, and improve the quality of life in rural America.



*One of the goals of RC&D councils is to bring groups of individuals together to promote conservation, development and utilization of natural resources.*

### The Process

To carry out the RC&D concept, diverse groups of local volunteers are brought together in a unique partnership to find solutions to their problems. The structure for this process involves:

- ★ Identifying Problems
- ★ Establishing Goals and Objectives
- ★ Developing Alternative Plans
- ★ Implementing Plans

# Facts About RC&D Councils

The RC&D Councils direct the program at the local level. They provide a focal point of local leadership, bring together private citizens, and local, state, and federal agencies to improve economic, social, and environmental well being. Each Council is governed by a board of directors. Nearly half of all Council members are locally elected officials including mayors, county commissioners, and county judges.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) supports the local RC&D Council by providing an employee to serve as a Coordinator. The Coordinator assists the Council in carrying out the Area Plan by providing guidance, advice, and helping direct program assistance from federal agencies, state agencies, and nonprofit organizations to RC&D Councils. The coordinator does not assume responsibilities reserved for local volunteer leaders serving on RC&D Councils.

RC&D has the proven ability and strength of leadership to engage and accomplish projects from the local to the national level. Authorized RC&D areas serve about 70 percent of the U.S. counties. Thirty-two new applicants are awaiting authorization by the Secretary of Agriculture.

Since the program began in 1962, the Secretary of Agriculture has authorized 368 RC&D Areas. Legislation authorizes up to 450 RC&D areas.

Texas has 22 authorized RC&D Areas and one active application area remaining to be authorized.

RC&D encourages community support with more than 21,000 volunteers nationwide. More than 2,000 volunteers serve in Texas.

All RC&D Councils are not for profit organizations and have tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



*RC&D Councils provide a focal point of local leadership, bring together private citizens, and local, state, and federal agencies to improve economic, social, and environmental well being in rural communities.*

RC&D councils develop area plans, defining their goals and objectives. Councils serve as a conduit for USDA programs that assist in Area Plan implementation.

For every dollar appropriated by Congress for RC&D, Councils leverage an average of \$14 from other sources nationwide. The leveraging ratio in Texas is 28:1.

The National Association of RC&D Councils is a 501(c)(3) organization that provides a collective national voice for local RC&D Councils. The National Association serves as an advocate for local councils on national and regional issues that deal with the quality of life in rural America.

The Texas Association of RC&D Areas, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) organization that serves all 23 organized RC&D Councils in Texas. The Association is committed to providing statewide education, leadership, and coordination as required to expedite the individual RC&D Area's mission. The Association's purpose is to enhance and improve the standard of living and quality of life in the member RC&D Areas.



# Alamo



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## Abandoned Water Well Plugging Project

Recognizing the importance of having safe, clean water in their ten county area, the Alamo RC&D board of directors went to work to garner over \$500,000 in grant money to plug abandoned wells in their area. Some of the abandoned wells were located in a sensitive area of the Edwards Aquifer, the sole water supply for San Antonio residents and outlying areas.

The Alamo RC&D Area, together with the San Antonio Water System (SAWS), plugged 131 abandoned wells in the ten county area



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*Abandoned water wells were posing a threat to ground water supplies.*

through grants from the Environmental Protection Agency, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and Kelly Air Force Redevelopment Program. The Alamo RC&D funded the plugging of nine of the wells. The wells plugged were all located on property owned

by low-income families, with over 75% of them being Hispanic.

As a result of the Alamo RC&D efforts, there has been a significant reduction of water contaminants enter the groundwater, making the water supply safer for humans, livestock and wildlife.



*The wells were plugged with funding from an EPA 319 grant, Kelly Air Force Re-development program, a TCEQ grant and funding from the Alamo RC&D.*

# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Improve water resources management
- ★ Improve the environment
- ★ Assist in community development
- ★ Improve human resources
- ★ Assist communities during disasters

## Recent Projects

### ★ Lakehills Civic Center Project

The Alamo RC&D Area together with the Medina Lake Betterment Association (MLBA) received grants to renovate the Lakehills Civic Center to offer recreational programs, exercise programs, arts/theatre performances, pet vaccination programs, community events, and a meeting location to its customers.

### ★ Wastewater Systems Project

A \$250,000 grant was received to bring to code failing septic systems in rural Wilson County. A total of 38 septic systems were upgraded. The project success was due in part to partnerships with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Wilson County Commissioners Court, and the San Antonio River Authority. Benefits include a safer, cleaner environment for the community. The upgrading of failing septic systems limited the amount of contaminants running into creeks, streams and lakes in the area.

### ★ Fire Protection Project

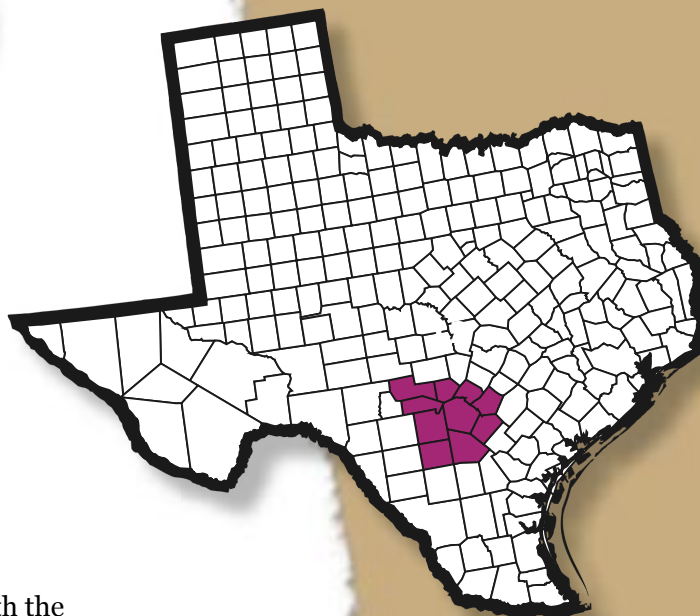
The Kerr County RC&D Committee initiated a volunteer fire department (VFD) fire protection program to aid procurement of equipment, fire fighting gear, facility, training, and water delivery capability.

### ★ Seguin Activity Center

A \$25,000 grant was received from the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) to complete a skate park area within the activity center. The Seguin Activity Center is a dynamic, energetic community activity center serving the recreational and self-developmental needs of co-ed youth and adult participants in the area.

## Counties Served:

Atascosa  
Bandera  
Bexar  
Comal  
Frio  
Guadalupe  
Kendall  
Kerr  
Medina  
Wilson



*To provide a focal point for local leadership to develop and implement strategies for wise use, development, and conservation of the natural resources within the area.*



Bandera County residents enjoy activities at the Lakehills Civic Center.

For Information Contact:

**Alamo RC&D Area**

4100 Piedras Drive East, Suite 253

San Antonio, TX 78228

Phone (210) 735-3391

Fax (210) 735-3392





# Big 8

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## Crop Fertilization the Way Nature Intended

In the past five years poultry production has increased tenfold in the Brazos Valley. With the establishment of Sanderson Farms' processing plant near Bryan, poultry waste management has become a concern on pasture and hayland.

The Big 8 RC&D Council, NRCS and the local soil and water conservation districts went to work forming a collaborated partnership with producers and groups, bringing resource concerns to the table. They sought out ways to



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*There was a substantial savings of approximately 30-34 dollars per acre using chicken litter verses commercial fertilizer, plus the added value of organic matter as a soil builder.*

address what they envisioned as a major buildup of phosphorus, nitrates, and other elements that would eventually affect the quality of surface and under ground water sources.

A demonstration plot was set up on Buffalo Ranch in the Brazos River Bottom in Burleson County where a large acreage of agroeconomic crops has been grown. The demonstration was on a field to be planted with corn in the spring of 2001. Prior to planting, a fall application of 2 tons/ac of chicken litter was applied. This ten-acre plot was flagged so no commercial

fertilizers could be accidentally applied. The plot was under a pivot sprinkler irrigation system along with the other 70 acres in the field. In the spring, prior to planting corn, another two tons of litter was applied. No commercial fertilizer was applied.

The results of the demonstration proved that almost the same yield produced under recommended fertilizer application was produced using 4 tons of chicken litter. The most important factor is that the phosphorus was taken up by the plant and removed from the location where applied.



# RC&D

## Counties Served:

Brazos  
Burleson  
Freestone  
Grimes  
Lee  
Leon  
Madison  
Robertson  
Waller  
Washington

### Goals

- ★ Assisting rural fire protection
- ★ Improving water quality
- ★ Assisting with infrastructure and social environmental needs
- ★ Public awareness and participation in recycling and composting
- ★ Education to inform citizens and their leaders on ways to improve the environment and their economic and social well being



*To support and enhance the ability of individuals and communities to develop, grow, and improve their quality of life while providing financial, volunteer leadership, and technical resources.*

### Recent Projects

★ **Evapotranspiration (ET) Beds (Grimes and Washington Counties)**

ET Beds are an alternative solution for dysfunctional septic systems. They are an exceptional way to utilize small amounts of space and sloping terrains.

★ **Simpson Youth and Education Center (Robertson County)**

A gathering place for Hearne and the surrounding area, featuring a meeting room with computers and adult supervision with mentoring and tutoring available after school. It will also be used to educate teens on drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, STDs, resume writing and obtaining a job.

★ **Grant Writing Workshops I and II**

Allow communities in rural areas the opportunity to better themselves through a local citizen's ability to seek funding for many worthwhile projects.

★ **Resource Teams and Rural Leadership Programs**

These programs enhance citizens in small communities to be able to communicate and become better leaders to make their communities become successful for the economic and social well-being of the citizens they represent.



*Brazos Valley poultry producers are flocking to a new way to manage chicken litter.*

*For Information Contact:*

**Big 8 RC&D Area**

1716 Briarcrest Drive, Suite 510

Bryan, TX 77802-2700

Phone (979) 846-0819

Fax (979) 846-0923



# Big Country



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## Gifts in Kind International

Big Country RC&D is a regional Global Affiliate Network Partner with Gifts in Kind International (GIKI). Since joining in 1991, Big Country RC&D and GIKI have provided \$6.2 million in needed products distributed in their service area.

The project has increased opportunities for youth, low income and non-profit entities in the area by providing access to needed resources and products. Partners including Office Depot, Bed, Bath and Beyond have provided items such as software, personal care products, office supplies and home and office furnishings that have increased



the potential success rate of these individuals and organizations.

Educational tools have been provided to financially strapped school districts. Personal care products and home furnishings

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*Through Tex-A-Syst, over 500 water samples have been collected and tested for nitrates, salts and bacteria in the past few years.*

have been provided to elderly and low income residents. Software, office furnishings and equipment have been provided to soil and water conservation districts through the program.



*Howard County residents lined up to register for rural water well screening.*



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Establishing job opportunities
- ★ Developing and Maintaining Water Supplies
- ★ Developing Sewage and Solid Waste Disposal Systems
- ★ Developing Adequate Health Care
- ★ Controlling Erosion and Reducing Saline Problems
- ★ Developing Rural and Urban Drainage Systems
- ★ Developing Wildlife and Recreational Potential
- ★ Improving Low Income, Minority and Senior Housing
- ★ Improving Rural Fire Departments

## Recent Projects

### ★ Distance Learning

The Big Country RC&D Area secured a \$6000 grant from the Texas Assn. of RC&D Areas and NRCS to conduct a series of board development video-teleconferences targeting city council members and other public board members. Topics covered include parliamentary procedure, Open Meetings Act, Public Information Act, Municipal Finance Laws, Texas Tort Claims Act, ethics laws and personnel issues. The sessions are being taught by the Texas Municipal League and broadcast to local communities.

### ★ Tex-a-syst (rural water screening and educational program)

The Big Country RC&D Area continues to partner with local Water Conservation Districts and the Texas Cooperative Extension Service to conduct water screening/Tex-a-syst evaluations in local communities.

### ★ Texas Rural Leadership Program (TRLP)

Big Country RC&D has continued to support the TRLP by conducting leadership development workshops for rural communities. Big Country RC&D continues to encourage development of the future leaders within our area.

## Counties Served:

Borden  
Fisher  
Garza  
Glasscock  
Howard  
Jones  
Kent  
Mitchell  
Nolan  
Scurry  
Sterling  
Taylor



***The Big Country RC&D Area, a not for profit organization, concentrates on Community and Rural Development to improve the quality of life in West Texas.***



*Big Country RC&D is involved in many projects in communities throughout their service area.*

For Information Contact:

***Big Country RC&D Area***

*P.O. Box 1114, Suite 304*

*Sweetwater, TX 79556-1114*

*Phone (325) 235-4300*

*Fax (325) 236-6625*



# Bluebonnet

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## Cleaning Up Johnson County

Illegal dumping in the rural areas of Johnson County had become a problem. Water quality, conservation and sustainable use of land resources were being negatively affected by the hazardous wastes.

As part of their outreach efforts, Bluebonnet RC&D wanted to include rural Johnson County residents in the Cleburne recycling event. Bluebonnet RC&D partnered with the City of Cleburne to co-sponsor the hazardous waste recycling. Prior to Bluebonnet partnering with the city, only residents in the City of Cleburne had been able to participate.

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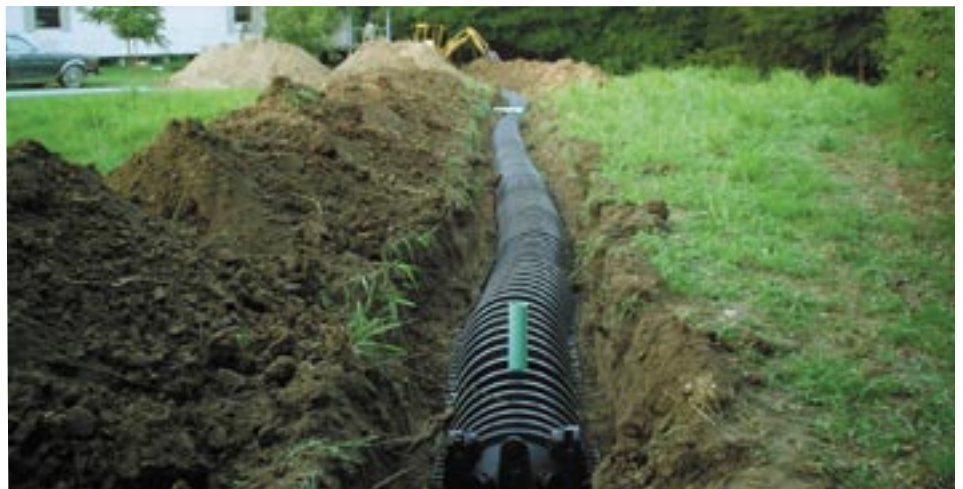


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*Hazardous wastes in Johnson County were affecting water quality and posing risks to other natural resources.*

This successful outreach effort allowed the rural residents of Johnson County safely dispose of hazardous chemicals from the garage, storage shed, or under the sink. The end result was less

hazardous waste entering the trash stream or dumped illegally along the road; this had a positive impact on water quality and our natural resources.



*With a grant from TCEQ, septic systems for economically disadvantaged and underserved households were repaired.*



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Improving social and economic conditions
- ★ Creating high quality jobs to reduce poverty
- ★ Assure adequate infrastructure to ensure public health and safety
- ★ A healthy environment existing in harmony with urban growth

## Recent Projects

### ★ Hunt County Country Living Expo

The Bluebonnet RC&D partnered with Hunt County Extension and other agencies to hold their Country Living Expo at the Hunt County Fair. A different subject affecting rural home owners was featured each evening. Instead of the usual classroom setting, this new approach provided more one-on-one interaction between the fair goers and speakers.

### ★ Ellis, Hill and Navarro Counties Septic Systems Project

Using a grant from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) through the Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEP) and working with the County Environmental Services and local churches, septic systems for economically disadvantaged and underserved households were repaired.

### ★ Kaufman County Environmental Odyssey

Bluebonnet RC&D helped sponsor a 2-day Environmental Odyssey for 2nd graders in Terrell. Over 600 school kids participated in the event. Some of the subjects involved soil erosion, wildlife conservation, water conservation, recycling, woodlands and the "bat lady".

### ★ Computer Donations to schools in Ellis, Hunt, Johnson and Parker Counties

Bluebonnet RC&D partnered with NRCS and RD to give surplus USDA computers a second life. The computers were made available to RC&D's through an upgrade to NRCS computer systems. Bluebonnet RC&D provided the computer hardware to five schools in our area. In one instance, FSA agreed to donate their surplus equipment to the same school.

## Counties Served:

Dallas  
Ellis  
Hill  
Hunt  
Johnson  
Kaufman  
Navarro  
Parker  
Rockwall  
Tarrant



*Promotes and directs efforts to improve the quality of life through community and rural development.*



*Surplus computers were donated to schools in Ellis, Hunt, Johnson & Parker counties.*

For Information Contact:

**Bluebonnet RC&D Area**

504 North Ridgeway, Suite C

Cleburne, TX 76033

Phone (817) 645-2883

Fax (817) 645-0629



United States Department of Agriculture



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# Central Texas

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## Conservation Tillage Alliance EQIP Education Grant – Educational Video

The Central Texas RC&D Council assisted the Blackland Conservation Tillage Alliance in preparing a grant for \$20,000. The grant funded the production of a video that demonstrates the benefits of applying various conservation tillage applications ranging from no-till to reduce till.

The video promotes the soil



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*In conservation tillage, crops are grown with minimal cultivation of the soil.*

and plant benefits typically not associated with this practice. This video is a collaborative effort between Monsanto Chemical Company and USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). It focuses on areas where

Blackland prairie soils are present. Typically, this area occurs in nearly 14,500 acres in 22 counties. There is a large audience for this tool. It can also be easily adapted for other major land resource areas.



*When the amount of tillage is reduced, the stubble or plant residues are not completely incorporated, and most or all remain on top of the soil rather than being plowed or disk ed into the soil.*



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Rural communities that provide a healthy and safe environment for residents to live and work
- ★ A rural economy that is diversified and offers opportunity for growth
- ★ A healthy and sustainable natural resource base

## Recent Projects

- ★ Round Mountain Community Center
- ★ Lost Pines Boy Scout Camp
- ★ City of Marlin Water Line Expansion
- ★ Coryell City/Osage Volunteer Fire Department



*Conservation tillage leaves at least 30 percent of the soil covered by crop residues.*

## Counties Served:



Bastrop  
Bell  
Caldwell  
Coryell  
Falls  
Hays  
Limestone  
McLennan  
Milam  
Travis  
Williamson

***To make Central Texas a better place to live and work through effective partnerships.***



*Crops grown without tillage use water more efficiently, the water-holding capacity of the soil increases, and water losses from runoff and evaporation are reduced.*

For Information Contact:

***Central Texas RC&D Area***

*400 Porter Street*

*P.O. Box 1295*

*Taylor, TX 76574-6295*

*Phone (512) 352-1318*

*Fax (512)-352-8255*



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# Chihuahuan Desert



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## WTFB Receives Upgraded Inventory System

In its 2003 strategic plan, the West Texas Food Bank (WTFB) board of directors identified insufficient computer technology as an area for improvement. They committed to a \$200,000 project to improve inefficiencies that negatively affect the Food Bank's ability to serve rural areas. During the second year of the Technology Initiative, the Chihuahuan Desert RC&D provided additional funding and in-kind support of more than 20 computer systems that accelerated the three-year project. CDRC&D received a \$35,000 grant from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service and incor-



porated this project into their area plan to connect nonprofit organizations in West Texas covering four RC&D areas.

With a newly integrated financial and inventory system in place, the West Texas Food Bank is further enhancing access to roughly 6 million pounds of rescued food from national and local donors that move in and out of its warehouse each year.

In addition to computer systems, training is provided to all agencies that will be using the newly integrated on-line inventory system to place orders 7 days a week 24 hours a day within the 22-county area.

Thanks to the new system, effi-

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*The CDRC&D donated more than 20 computers to help upgrade the West Texas Food Bank technology system.*

ciencies will be created by reducing administrative burdens, shrinking costs associated with taking and filling orders by 50 percent, improving Food Bank customer service, reducing overall spending for agency supplemental purchases, and increasing supply chain controls.



*The CDRC&D assists citizens with learning basic computer skills.*



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Improve the economic stability of the area through diversification of agricultural opportunity and resource development
- ★ Improve the quality and quantity of ground and surface water sources for all users
- ★ Improve the overall economy of rural communities through diversification
- ★ Improve community facilities and services to provide a good quality of life for all citizens

## Recent Projects

- ★ **Military Re-utilization Program**  
This program enables the RC&D to claim used Military surplus items stored at surrounding bases within the area and distribute them to nonprofit organizations.
- ★ **Gifts In Kind International**  
This program provides generous donations of many different products from name-brand retailers and makes them available to nonprofit organizations.
- ★ **Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo (Tigua Indians) Restoration Project**  
A conservation demonstration project at its 3,600 acre Hueco Mountains property located near Hueco Tanks State Park in El Paso County. Project will restore 30 acres of disturbed Desert Grassland and Shrub habitat, and conduct education and outreach to 400 tribal members in order to promote conservation awareness.
- ★ **Dry Hydrant Project**  
A project that adapts dry fire hydrants to many types of existing livestock water storage facilities or placement of 5,000 gallon tanks of water strategically placed in rural areas of high population for fire protection.
- ★ **Tex\*A\*Syst**  
A project that tests rural citizens well water in the 6-county area of CDRC&D, and provides the necessary education to protect safe drinking water for everyone.

## Counties Served:

Brewster  
Culberson  
El Paso  
Hudspeth  
Jeff Davis  
Presidio



***Addressing the needs of the people of the Chihuahuan Desert by improving the economic and social well-being within the area, while conserving and developing existing resources.***



*Tigua Indian tribal members take part in a conservation demonstration project in the Hueco Mountains.*

For Information Contact:

## ***Chihuahuan Desert RC&D Area***

*Sul Ross State University  
Academic & Computer Resource Building  
Room 102  
P.O. Box C-61  
Alpine, TX 79832  
Phone (432) 837-8247  
Fax (432) 837-8701*



# Chisholm Trail

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## Clay County Homesite Constructed Wetlands Demonstration

Due to the permeability of the soils in Clay County, residents have been required to install alternative systems for home sewage treatment. The alternative treatment of choice with certified installers is the aerobic treatment plant and spray distribution of effluent.

The county realized the need to provide the residents with a low cost, low maintenance alternative to the "aerobic system" now being offered. Alarminglly,



approximately 95 percent of the "aerobic systems" in the county are failing due to neglect of the required maintenance to the systems.

Through the cooperation of Clay County Commissioners Court, Little Wichita Soil and Water Conservation District, Wichita County Public Health District and U.S. EPA, the six demonstration sites have been installed and monitored for several years.

The demonstration is being moved into Phase II with additional systems being planned for installation as the result of a grant received by the newly appointed State Constructed

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*Clay county residents tour one of six demonstration sites for "aerobic system" home sewage treatment.*

Wetland Committee. At least two more demonstration sites will be installed in Clay County with the end goal being the complete acceptance as an alternative treatment for home site sewage by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).



*Demonstration site tour.*



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Provide or expand needed community facilities and services.
- ★ Improve education and training level of all citizens.
- ★ Promote and develop recreation and tourism.
- ★ Improve and maintain environmental resources of Area.
- ★ Increase economic potential of Area
- ★ Protect Air and Water quality and quantity.

## Recent Projects

- ★ **Montague County Water Well Screening -**  
92 water samples were screened for bacteria, nitrates and total salts. An educational seminar was presented to assist rural residents with proper well-head management.
- ★ **Bowie Rural Fire Department -**  
Awarded \$81,000 from the Texas Forest Service to purchase a renovated tank truck and \$103,500 from FEMA to purchase a new pumper/tanker truck.
- ★ **Electra ISD -**  
Received a \$84,800 grant to construct a new agricultural facility for the school and community.
- ★ **Bryson Volunteer EMS -**  
Received \$73,400 in grant funds to purchase a new ambulance for the department.
- ★ **Collin County Household Hazardous Waste Collection**  
Through the TCEQ Supplemental Environmental Program (SEP), we applied \$28,000 to expand a planned HHW event in McKinney to residents outside of the city.
- ★ **Denton County Wastewater Treatment Assistance -**  
Using \$9,000 in TCEQ SEP funds, 3 low income households in Denton County were assisted with repair or replacement of their failing septic system.
- ★ **Bowie Fire Department -**  
Received \$40,005 in grant funds to purchase a thermal camera, 37 pagers, 5 laptops, 6 encapsulating suits and an accountability system for the department.
- ★ **Community Improvement Grants -**  
Chisholm Trail RC&D awarded 8 \$500 grants to sponsoring organizations to complete community improvement projects in the 11-county area.

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## Counties Served:

Archer  
Clay  
Collin  
Cooke  
Denton  
Grayson  
Jack  
Montague  
Wichita  
Wise  
Young



***Enhancing the rural economy and environment through conservation and development of our resources in North Central Texas.***



*\$28,000 was applied to expand a planned Household Hazardous Waste collection event in McKinney to residents outside of the city.*

For Information Contact:  
**Chisholm Trail RC&D Area**  
201 Walnut, Suite A  
P.O. Box 454  
Bowie, TX 76230  
Phone (940) 872-7002  
Fax (940) 872-7003  
[www.chisholmtrailrcd.org](http://www.chisholmtrailrcd.org)



# Concho Valley



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## Community Clean Up

McCulloch County residents no longer need to display broken down washers, dryers, and refrigerators as lawn ornaments. Instead, through the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Texas County Clean-Up Program, many of the residents of the county have taken advantage of getting rid of their inoperable appliances. These cleanups not only offer residents recycling opportunities usually found only in larger cities, but are necessary because many rural residents generate specific types of agricultural solid waste. Approximately 225 tons of recycled



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*The Concho Valley RC&D provides community support through various means, from financial assistance (above) to brush clearing (left.)*

material was collected from this cleanup.

Local coordination and cosponsors of the project were the McCulloch County Commissioners Court, Texas Cooperative Extension, and Concho Valley

RC&D Council. Other partners were the Lower Colorado River Authority, Texas Department of Agriculture, and McCulloch County Sheriff's Offender Services. TCEQ provided a grant for the promotion of the event.



*A large appliance crusher was used to help recycle old appliances and clean up McCulloch County.*



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Stimulate economic development
- ★ Improve the quality of life
- ★ Protect natural resource base

## Recent Projects

### ★ Grant to the Cooper Employee Benefit fund of Heartland Rig International (HRI).

Through the efforts of the RC&D and the LCRA United Charities, \$1000 was donated to the Cooper Employee Benefit Fund for families affected by recent layoffs at HRI. The United Charities Organization is owned, operated and funded by the employees of the Lower River Colorado Authority. Employees voluntarily donate up to two hours of their pay to United Charities per month and then decide how the funds will be distributed. United Charities contributes more than \$385,000 annually, supporting a variety of nonprofit organizations throughout LCRA's service area.

### ★ Turbo Draft

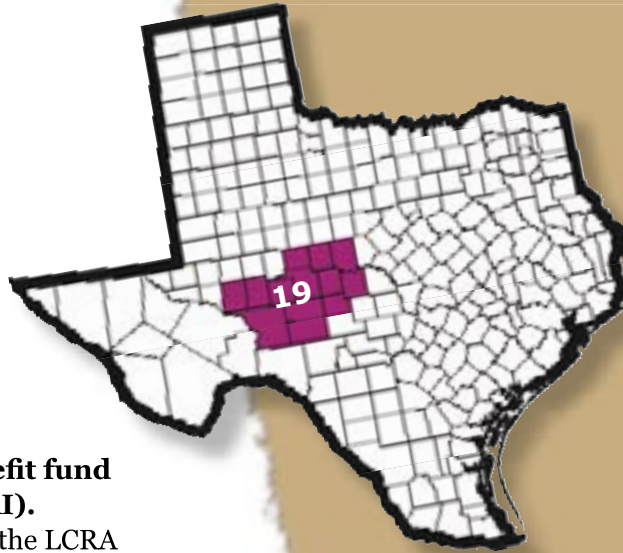
The Brady Fire Department hosted a Turbo Draft demonstration at Brady Lake. Fire Fighters Tool Company representative, John Gill, provided the turbo draft for the demonstration. There were 30 people from surrounding Volunteer Fire Departments who attended the demonstration.

### ★ McCulloch SWCD

With 50 flood prevention structures in McCulloch County, mesquite infestation has prompted the District to begin an eradication project on these sites. With RC&D matching funds, 30 acres mesquite infested structures will be treated during the course of the year.

### ★ Upton County Recycling

Upton County received \$4000 to establish a tire recycling project through an innovative approach to resolve enforcement actions assessed by TCEQ. The County Commissioners organized a tire recycling day at the Upton County land fill. Approximately 1,500 tires were recycled.



## Counties Served:

Coke  
Coleman  
Concho  
Crockett  
Irion  
McCulloch  
Menard  
Reagan  
Runnels  
Schleicher  
Sutton  
Tom Green  
Upton

*Improving the quality of life  
in Concho County.*



*Over 1,500 tires were recycled at the  
Upton County Land fill.*

For Information Contact:

**Concho Valley RC&D Area**

306 West Lockhart

P.O. Box 627

Brady, TX 76825-0627

Phone (325) 597-4666

Fax (325) 597-2408



# De-Go-La

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## Private Lands Riparian Habitat Restoration Initiative

Riparian habitats along the Gulf Coast of Texas represent a very important resource in terms of water quality. They are also valuable habitat for terrestrial wildlife and especially migratory songbirds. A properly functioning riparian buffer area serves as a filter to remove sediment and contaminants from runoff before it enters the fragile estuarine habitats found in the Coastal Bend of Texas.

The De-Go-La RC&D Council



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*De-Go-La RC&D helps develop and implement plans that encourage private land owners to properly manage riparian areas.*

received grants from the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program (CBBEP) and the Coastal Coordination Council. These grants have been used to contract with private landowners to develop and implement riparian habitat restoration plans. The plan restores functionality of riparian areas and encourages private landowners to properly manage them. Another goal is to encourage landowners to participate in Farm Bill Programs such as the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP). Partners in this initiative include the RC&D Area, CBBEP, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

(NRCS), Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), Center for Coastal Studies – Texas A&M University, Coastal Coordination Council, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Private landowners participate in the program by signing a contract to develop the plan, implement the restoration practices and maintain the riparian area for 10 years. In return, they receive payments that are negotiated by the RC&D Council. NRCS provides technical assistance to landowners. SWCDs provide administrative assistance to the RC&D Council in reviewing and approving plans developed.



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Rural communities that provide a healthy and safe environment for residents to live and work
- ★ A rural economy that is diversified and offers opportunity for growth
- ★ A healthy and sustainable natural resource base

## Recent Projects

- ★ Community Assessments, Bee Co., Sinton, Gregory
- ★ Household Hazardous Waste Collection - Gregory
- ★ Fundraising Workshop for Non-Profits
- ★ Economic Development Summit
- ★ Matching Grants – 2004
- ★ 2004 State Association Meeting



## Counties Served:

Aransas  
Bee  
Calhoun  
DeWitt  
Fayette  
Goliad  
Gonzales  
Jackson  
Karnes  
Lavaca  
Live Oak  
McMullen  
Nueces  
Refugio  
San Patricio  
Victoria

*To provide leadership and coordination in achieving quality of life and quality in the environment for people living in rural communities.*



## For Information Contact: *De-Go-La RC&D Area*

2601 Azalea, Suite 6  
Victoria, TX 77901  
Phone (361) 570-7138  
Fax (361) 570-7139  
[www.degolarcd.org](http://www.degolarcd.org)



*In partnership with the USDA-NRCS, the De-Go-La RC&D Council provides over \$100,000 worth of useable federal surplus property to local governments and non-profit organizations each year. Computers, such as this laptop donated to the Gonzales County Sheriff's Department, are just one of many useful items available.*

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



# Four Winds

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## Protecting Water Supplies

One of the priority concerns identified within the Four Winds RC&D Area is protecting underground water supplies. In 1999, a program was initiated to better educate private water well owners on how to protect their well, and to better manage the area around the wellhead. To encourage these well owners to participate in the program, Four Winds RC&D Councils purchased mobile water testing equipment with the assistance of an \$8,500 grant award.

Well owners get their water samples screened for contaminants (nitrates, bacteria, and total salts). When the owner returns to receive their individual results



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*Among other projects, the Four Winds RC&D hosts field days to provide grazing management learning opportunities.*

from the screening, they also have an opportunity to discuss management and safety for the well and underground water supplies. The TEX\*A\*SYST educational information is provided to the well owners to assist them with implementing better management.

Since 1999, each of the 13 counties within the Four Winds RC&D Area have held at least one water well screening. Four Winds RC&D Area also assists other RC&D Areas with providing this opportunity for the residents of their respective RC&D Areas.



*Water testing helps water well owners learn how to better manage their well and underground water supplies.*



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Decrease soil loss
- ★ Improve water quality and quantity
- ★ Enhance the quality of life
- ★ Protect and improve wildlife habitat

## Recent Projects

### ★ Project Dayhab -

MHMR Center in Quanah was the recipient of a matching grant from Four Winds RC&D to assist with the purchase of a big screen television. Several surplus computers acquired from the State of Texas were also donated for their use.

### ★ Grazing for Dollars-

A field day was conducted to provide more than 40 land owners and land managers an opportunity to learn more about grazing management and its impact on wildlife habitat. Four Winds RC&D hosted the field day with assistance from Hall-Childress SWCD, NRCS, and Texas Grazing Land Conservation Initiative.

### ★ Rural Fire Protection-

In an effort to improve rural fire protection, new vehicles and equipment have been purchased using a variety of funding sources. In the past year, four departments have bought new trucks, and three have updated their personal protective gear.



## Counties Served:

Baylor  
Childress  
Cottle  
Dickens  
Foard  
Hardeman  
Haskell  
King  
Knox  
Motley  
Stonewall  
Throckmorton  
Wilbarger

*Encouraging area residents to help themselves improve their quality of life by providing effective leadership and utilizing diverse partnerships and resources.*



*MHMR Center in Quanah receives a big screen TV through Project Dayhab.*

For Information Contact:

**Four Winds RC&D Area**

P.O. Box 548

606 East Main

Knox City, TX 79529-0548

Phone (940) 658-3680

Fax (940) 658-3781





# High Plains

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## Playa Lakes Festival

The High Plains RC&D was pleased to help sponsor a unique experience for 74 students in grades 4-6 from six counties in the Texas and Oklahoma Panhandles. The object was for them to enjoy a 4 day workshop to learn about water resources in areas that overlay the Ogallala Aquifer.

The students that attended the Playa Lakes Festival held in Nazareth learned how the Southern High Plains came to be so flat and windswept. But they also learned that the semi-arid plains are a land brimming with "hidden waters."

The 4-day course summarized the fact that with an average yearly precipitation of about 16-18 inches, the Southern High Plains feature an amazing water cycle. "Hidden waters" are at work in the thousands of



playa lakes, small springs, a dozen large draws, canyon and streams that became the headwaters of Texas' biggest rivers, and, of course, the mighty Ogallala Aquifer.

Students attending the course gained a better understanding of how the Plains water cycle works, how the Ogallala is steadily being depleted and what they can do to preserve water and promote a healthy water cycle. Students learned about playa lakes: their origins, flora and fauna, their impact on wildlife and ability to recharge the Ogallala Aquifer. They were also presented with learning modules where students were used sketching, painting and photography as tools for learning about the water cycle. In addition, the group learned about water reuse, and got a tour of

the Nazareth wastewater ponds to observe how they could be better utilized.

The Playa Lakes Festival was organized with the help of Darryl Birkenfeld, Ph.d, Coordinator of the Ogallala Commons, an education resource network active in eight states of the Ogallala Aquifer region. The Running Water Soil & Water Conservation District, High Plains Underground Water District, Texas Tech University, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, local businesses, Nazareth school, local landowners and many volunteers came together to make the festival happen. The 4-day course was such a success, plans are underway to host festivals in more counties each year for several years in areas covering the Ogallala Aquifer states.

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*The Playa Lakes Festival featured education on natural resources, with an emphasis on playa lakes and water conservation.*



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Natural resource conservation
- ★ Community development
- ★ Development of recreation, tourism, cultural, and historical resources

## Recent Projects

- ★ **Leadership Training**  
Attended by 21 community leaders in Spearman.
- ★ **Supplemental Environmental Projects**  
\$40,000 for Emergency Response Equipment provided to VFD's in 9 communities.
- ★ **Great Gifts Program**  
Retail Donations provided to area youth, ill, and needy organizations.



*The Playa Lakes Festivals are a fun learning experience with hands on projects, tours, art work, photography, plant collections and more.*



*Promoting Partnerships for Progress in the Texas Panhandle.*

## Counties Served:

Armstrong  
Carson  
Castro  
Dallam  
Deaf Smith  
Hansford  
Hartley  
Hutchinson  
Moore  
Oldham  
Parmer  
Potter  
Randall  
Sherman  
Swisher



*Hands-on experiences bring nature to life for students.*

For Information Contact:  
**High Plains RC&D Area**

1306 West 9th  
Friona, TX 79035  
Phone (806) 250-2020  
Fax (806) 250-3768



USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



# Hill Country



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## San Saba American Patriot Garden

At a time when American was needing heroes, the town of San Saba stepped up to show it's true colors: red, white and blue. In a partnership with the Lower Hudson-Long Island RC&D Area in New York and the Hill Country RC&D Area, the City of San Saba created an American Patriot Garden, the first of its kind in Texas.

The City of San Saba and park employees played a vital part in the success of the project. The Master Gardeners of San Saba took this on as one of their community projects. The Lower Colorado River Authority made the first donation of seven trees to the site, which was



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*The American Patriot Garden in San Saba was dedicated on September 11, 2004.*

the initial monetary donation of the project. There were many other partners who put in a great deal of services, such as donated labor, materials and publicity.

The official groundbreaking ceremony was September 11, 2003. Land preparation started in late spring of 2004 and the various phases proceeded through the

summer. The official Dedication ceremony was held on September 11, 2004.

The result of the community effort is a quiet and peaceful place of reflection of tragic 9-11 incident and a place of remembrance to honor our service men and women who are currently fighting for our freedoms.



*The American Patriot Garden's success was due largely to the great amount of community involvement.*



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Provide leadership development opportunities at the local level to enable the regrowth of rural communities and generate a more diverse economy
- ★ Promote and market West Texas to encourage economic diversification and stability
- ★ Support change in the agriculture market and serve as the catalyst to coordinate nontraditional crops and markets to assure the future success of the Wes-Tex farmer and rancher
- ★ Play a vital role in the education of local users and emphasize the need for clean and adequate water supplies for all users in the Area that will meet federal and state requirements

## Recent Projects

### ★ Hill Country Business Tourism Workshops

A "Series of Three" workshops to help surrounding landowners look at viable business/agriculture diversification opportunities to provide income through nature tourism.

### ★ Dry hydrant demonstration sites

These sites allow for more water availability to rural volunteer fire departments in our 8-county area.

### ★ The Junction Community Garden

A new project that will provide fresh vegetables to low-income and needy families in Kimble County.



*The American Patriot Garden's project addresses natural resource issues such as land reclamation, landscaping, and water quality and conservation.*

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## Counties Served:

Blanco  
Burnet  
Gillespie  
Kimble  
Lampasas  
Llano  
Mason  
San Saba



***Volunteers working at the local level, committed to improving the economy, environment and living standards of the Hill Country RC&D Area.***



*The Patriot Garden project addresses community pride and heritage.*

For Information Contact:

***Hill Country RC&D Area***

*1224 Austin St. Suite A*

*P.O. Box 303*

*Mason, TX 76856-0303*

*Phone (325) 347-5005*

*Fax (325) 347-5003*



United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service

# Leon-Bosque



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## Field of Dreams

The Leon Bosque RC&D is out to prove that the grass really can be greener. The RC&D obtained TCEQ 319 grants in the amount of \$350,000 to go forward with a project that will utilize livestock waste.

The overall project goal is to gain acceptance of a blend of compost and sand for top dressing of athletic fields. The blend of 50% compost and 50% sand is superior in many respects to the sand that is now used, and is easily affordable by the municipal, school district, college/university, and sport associations that maintain fields.

The project results in a sig-  
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*Cows can help create greener soccer, baseball and football fields in Bosque county.*

nificant market for compost from dairy operations in the Bosque River Watershed, helping achieve 50% haul out of dairy manure from the watershed as described in the

TMDL implementation plan. Over 1000 yards have been distributed. This project has the potential to provide natural fertilization using a natural resource.



*Compost from dairy operations can be used as fertilizer on athletic*



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Support development of community based leadership and planning.
- ★ Provide education, training and outreach that will build human capacity.
- ★ Provide advocacy and facilitation for community based strategic planning.
- ★ Provide advocacy, education and training on wise use and management of natural resources.

## Recent Projects

### ★ Hosted annual Rural Issues Forum

Partnered with Bluebonnet RC&D to host informational workshops for new landowners. These workshops demonstrated best management practices and resources that are available to new landowners.

### ★ Community Assessments

-In partnership with Texas Rural Development Council, City of Hamilton, Hamilton County, Hamilton EDC, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and Hamilton's Women's Council led a community assessment for the City of Hamilton.

-The City of Glen Rose and Leon Bosque RC&D partnered to host community assessment in Glen Rose.

### ★ Community Improvement Grants

-Somervell County Historical Commission- awarded \$2,000 to renovate the interior of the Lanham Mill Schoolhouse.

-Hamilton Economic Development Corporation- awarded \$2,000 to recruit and develop a pool of candidates for local offices.

-Central Texas Youth Fair-awarded \$2,000 to assist with the construction of a new goat barn.

-Mills County Historical Commission-contributed \$2,000 to obtain materials to continue to acquire, preserve and interpret items related to Mills County.

-Clifton Chamber of Commerce-contributed \$2,000 for advertising for the "Norwegian Country Christmas Tour."

## Counties Served:

Bosque  
Brown  
Callahan  
Comanche  
Eastland  
Erath  
Hamilton  
Hood  
Mills  
Palo Pinto  
Shackelford  
Somervell  
Stephens



*Providing leadership and coordination to improve the quality of life and quality of the environment in rural communities.*



*The Central Texas Youth Fair received \$2,000 from the Leon Bosque RC&D to construct a new goat barn.*

For Information Contact:

## Leon Bosque RC&D Area

P.O. Box 359

200 East Elm Street, Suite B

Glen Rose, TX 76043

Phone (254) 897-3747

Fax (254) 897-4730



# Northeast Texas



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## Offering Youth a Helping Hand

Students in the community of Clarksville and Red River County are getting a head start on their future thanks to the Red River Youth Association Grant from the Northeast Texas RC&D. Volunteers in the association, known as Parents in Action, instill in area youth the values and study habits which will make them better citizens through weekly tutoring in a safe, drug free location.

The challenges for making this idea a reality included acquiring a building for the meeting place, securing the financial resources to purchase the needed



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*Youth of all ages are benefiting from Red River Youth Association Grant from the Northeast Texas RC&D.*

equipment and supplies for the project, and getting volunteers to serve as tutors.

With financial help from the Northeast Texas RC&D and some willing volunteers, the Red River Youth Association now provides a place for youth to go in the

evenings and Parents in Action provides one-on-one after school tutoring. This project addresses the important issue of education of under-achieving youth and their potential for college admission or acquisition of job skills for meaningful employment.



*Members of the community are enjoying Gorman Downtown Park.*



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Management of Our Natural Resources
- ★ Additional Public Facilities & Improved Community Services
- ★ Better Job Opportunities for Our Residents
- ★ Education & Job Training for the Current Job Market
- ★ Increased Recreational Opportunities.

## Recent Projects

- ★ Ranger Wastewater Treatment Plant
- ★ Gorman Downtown Park
- ★ Mills County Historical Museum
- ★ New Landowner Assistance



*Landowners receive technical assistance for land management decisions on their property.*



## Counties Served:

Bowie  
Camp  
Cass  
Delta  
Fannin  
Franklin  
Hopkins  
Lamar  
Marion  
Morris  
Rains  
Red River  
Titus

*To provide the local volunteer leadership that will result in the successful attainment of our goals.*



*New fire hydrant installation.*

For Information Contact:  
**Northeast Texas RC&D Area**  
1745 D Ballard Drive  
Paris, TX 75460-2831  
Phone (903) 785-6701, Ext. 3  
Fax (903) 785-4899



# North Rolling Plains

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## Range Plant Identification Book Published

Land managers, ranchers and farmers are recognizing more than ever that resource education is an important aspect of grazing land management. An understanding of native plants is the key to properly manage native grazing lands. Identification and knowledge of those plants tells a lot about range condition and trends.

However, a good plant identification book was not available in the Texas Panhandle. Working with many project partners, the North Rolling Plains RC&D devel-



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*The Range Plant Identification book has proved popular with land managers throughout Texas.*

oped and printed a plant identification book, "Common Rangeland Plants of the Texas Panhandle." The book features both sketches and color photographs of 100 grasses, forbs and woody plants found in the Panhandle region. Partners included NRCS Texas (EQIP Education Grant), Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative Grants from both the state and regional levels, RC&D State-wide grant program, and about 30 Soil & Water Conservation Districts.

Published in 2004, the book has been very popular across not only the Texas Panhandle region but also the rest of the state. It

has provided benefits to ranchers, teachers and students who are using the books to learn about the native plants on all levels. It has been a tool that conservationists from NRCS and other agencies are using to promote proper grazing management and to work closer with ranchers who are interested in improving the condition of their native grazing lands.

Over 1,500 of the books were handed out to schools, libraries and service agencies, with orders being taken for more. Proceeds from the book sales will go toward a second printing, which will include 200 plant species.



# RC&D

## Counties Served:

Brisco  
Collingsworth  
Donley  
Gray  
Hall  
Hemphill  
Lipscomb  
Ochiltree  
Roberts  
Wheeler



## Goals

- ★ Management of natural resources
- ★ Additional public facilities and improved community services
- ★ Better job opportunities
- ★ Education and job training
- ★ Increased recreational opportunities

## Recent Projects

### ★ Lesser Prairie Chicken management

Organized a Local Work Group to start a Lesser Prairie Chicken Emphasis Area under EQIP. The purpose is to promote improved management of habitat for the Lesser Prairie Chicken (a "threatened" species).

*Providing quality assistance for natural resource protection and community development.*

### ★ Public Access Internet

Worked with Roberts County to set up a public room for internet access in a small rural community and to educate people on how to use computers and technology. We even sponsored a basic computer/Internet course for older citizens who felt left behind by computer technology. The course taught them how to use a computer and the Internet.



### ★ AED Equipment and Training for Schools

We assisted the Pampa ISD to purchase Automatic External Defibrillators, and train their personnel, on life saving techniques using AEDs, CPR, and First Aid. We are currently working with Clarendon ISD on a similar project. AEDs are used to re-start a heart after "Sudden Cardiac Arrest" which has become all too common at athletic events across the nation.

*The North Rolling Plains RC&D area is promoting improved management of habitat for the Lesser Prairie Chicken, a "threatened" species.*

### ★ Rural Tourism Enhancement

We are working with several rural communities along Interstate 40 (Old Route 66) to develop signage, booklets, brochures and billboards to entice travelers to get off Route 66 and explore tourism opportunities in rural communities across the Texas Panhandle.

For Information Contact:  
**North Rolling Plains  
RC&D Area**

NBC Plaza, Suite 107  
1224 North Hobart  
Pampa, TX 79065-7148  
Phone (806) 669-0312  
Fax (806) 669-6119




# Pecos Valley

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## Pecos County Spaceport Development Program

In 1999, the state of Texas gave the authority for counties to create spaceport authorities. Texas Aerospace Commission developed a “stair step” approach for these new authorities to attract a spaceport to Texas. Pecos County in far west Texas was chosen as a possible inland site for reusable launch vehicles.

In June 2001, Pecos County Commissioners Court created the Pecos County/West Texas Spaceport Development Corporation. The following goals were developed:

- 
- 1) Develop a reusable launch facility in Pecos County;
  - 2) Create Jobs;
  - 3) Promote Tourism;
  - 4) Bring new technology to west Texas;
  - 5) Develop a global educational program for Texas Schools; and
  - 6) Acquire environmental, technical, and economic data to support the development of the launch site.

In order to achieve these goals, the Corporation received grant funding from Texas Aerospace Commission and USDA-Rural Development. The money helped prepare business plans, economic impact studies, and

educational programs with several Texas universities and high schools. Pecos Valley RC&D Council adopted this project to assist with technical and environmental issues.

In October 2002, the Corporation experienced its first successful rocket launch. A contract was then signed with JP Aerospace to use the Pecos County launch site to develop a space-maneuvering vehicle and the Combat Access program for the U.S. Air Force.

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*The sky is the limit for opportunities in the vast open spaces in West Texas.*



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Lower unemployment and higher per capita income for all residents of the area.
- ★ Clean and adequate water supply for all users in the area that will meet both federal and state requirement.
- ★ Community facilities and services that provide a good quality of life for all citizens.

## Recent Projects

- ★ **Resource Support Teams –**  
City of Irran, Texas and the City of Crane, Texas has just completed their community assessments. Both cities have started developing committees to begin with their concerns.
- ★ **Matching Grants–**  
12 community matching grants throughout eight counties.
- ★ **Water Harvesting –**  
Trans-Pecos Water Harvesting (Pecos County)



USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## Counties Served:

Crane  
Ector  
Loving  
Pecos  
Reeves  
Terrell  
Ward  
Winkler



*Helping West Texans help themselves.*



*Community assessment meeting in Irran, Texas.*

For Information Contact:

***Pecos Valley RC&D Area***

*1900 S. Stockton, Suite 10*

*Monahans, Texas 79756*

*Phone (432) 943-3888*

*Fax (432) 943-4129*



United States Department of Agriculture





# Pineywoods



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## Pine Straw Harvesting In East Texas

Use of pine straw as a ground cover mulch in landscaping around trees and in flower beds has recently risen in popularity in Texas because it is clean, attractive, and provides exceptional value for most landscaping situations. Pine straw only recently gained popularity in Texas, but it has been a popular landscape ground cover throughout the South for the last 25 years. It is one of the most widely used mulches for all projects ranging from residential flower beds to industrial complexes and highway landscapes.

Pine straw is a renewable resource that may be harvested each



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*Pine straw mulch is becoming one of the most widely used mulches for all types of landscape projects.*

year in Texas, and no trees are cut to collect it. Pine trees in the Texas Pineywoods naturally shed needles each year. These needles can be raked into bales of pine straw and used as landscape mulch.

The pine straw industry is continuing to grow. There are sev-

en pine straw balers in East Texas. The U.S. Forest Service provides funding to develop brochures, a video, and a website to assist in the development of this industry.

A list of current pine straw balers is on the website at [pineywoodsred.org](http://pineywoodsred.org).



*Pine straw can be harvested each year and no trees are cut to collect it.*



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Adequate infrastructure which ensures the public's health and safety.
- ★ An area economy that will reduce poverty by creating industry that supplies quality jobs.
- ★ Education which allows all the people of the area an opportunity to participate and improve their social and economic well being.

## Recent Projects

### ★ Constructed Wetlands—

Home site demonstrations have successfully installed 10 constructed wetlands to replace failing systems in Nacogdoches and Trinity Counties. These systems provide a low cost, natural and chemical free process to effectively treat wastewater.

### ★ Rural Emergency Protection—

The objective of this project is to develop a plan that will systematically improve volunteer fire department fire suppression and also train them in their role as first responders to an emergency or threats of homeland security.

### ★ Poultry Litter Project—

This project assessed the needs of the poultry industry related to litter and made recommendations for the most profitable use of the resource.

### ★ Community Development Projects—

Community members in the Redland area of Angelina County worked together to find funding to build a new constructed wetland treatment system. In Nacogdoches and Angelina counties, sewer systems were installed through RC&D-assisted loans and grants.



## Counties Served:

Anderson  
Angelina  
Cherokee  
Houston  
Nacogdoches  
Rusk  
San Augustine  
Sabine  
Shelby  
Trinity

*Improve quality of life with responsible stewardship through utilization and development of natural and human resources.*



*Chicken litter is being used as a resource to fertilize pastures, forage crops and other crops while improving soil quality.*

For Information Contact:

## *Pineywoods RC&D Area*

*118 East Hospital, Suite 103*

*Nacogdoches, TX 75961-3514*

*Phone (936) 568-0414*

*Fax (936) 552-8917*



# Rio Bravo



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## South Texas Eco-Tourism Marketing Alliance

The Rio Bravo RC&D Area is heavily involved in developing its Eco-Tourism (Historic/Nature/Cultural) industry in South Texas. The goal is to have South Texas become a preferred tourist destination.

Rio Bravo RC&D Area hosted several seminars to promote ranch diversification as a means of maintaining the family farm or ranch. More than 300 producers participated in these seminars. This effort resulted in developing a 300-mile Ranching Heritage Trail.



South Texas Eco-Tourism Marketing Alliance (STEMA) was organized as a support network to advertise and promote member ranches. It includes the attractions

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*South Texas is becoming a favorite tourist destination thanks to a warm climate and multitude of activities available.*

that each ranch offers as well as contact information.

Tourism is a large contributor to economic development in the Rio Bravo RC&D Area.



*Farmers and ranchers discuss several opportunities to diversify their agriculture enterprises.*



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Improve water quality and quantity of rivers and lakes
- ★ Economic development and job creation
- ★ Develop and provide recreational facilities to all residents in the area
- ★ Provide needed community services and facilities
- ★ Improve transportation and communication systems within the area
- ★ Critical area treatment research
- ★ Education, outreach, and leadership

## Recent Projects

### ★ South Texas Eco-Tour Marketing Alliance

This alliance is a self-help roundtable of tourist oriented farmers and ranchers wanting to diversify their agriculture enterprises by opening up their operations to visitor friendly activities.

### ★ Computer Training Offered

The RC&D Area in partnership with other organizations and schools has been providing basic computer skills classes to local residents.

### ★ West Texas Telecommunications Project

This project is an education/training initiative designed to provide field personnel with the latest technology to provide faster and more efficient service to local producers. Another aspect of the project is computer training to local citizens in partnership with local schools, libraries, and small business centers.



## Counties Served:

Brooks  
Cameron  
Duval  
Hidalgo  
Jim Hogg  
Jim Wells  
Kenedy  
Kleberg  
Starr  
Webb  
Willacy  
Zapata

*Implementing strategies for the orderly development, wise use, and conservation of native resources.*



*Through the Rio Bravo RC&D, basic computer classes are offered to local residents.*

For Information Contact:  
**Rio Bravo RC&D Area**

P.O. Box 1006

Zapata, TX 78076-1006

Phone (956) 765-6911

Fax (956) 765-5209



# Rio Grande-Nueces



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## RC&D Office Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

The Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D Area was authorized in 2002 and is currently working on council organization and leadership development, as well as implementing an aggressive Information and Outreach Program. The marketing strategy includes the development of educational materials and presentations to sponsors and potential sponsors, as well as other organizations.

The Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D Area is actively establishing



“County Councils” (local work groups) and is working with the Texas/Mexico Border Coalition in planning and implementing a series of outreach meetings targeting nontraditional USDA clients.

Ideas for potential RC&D projects are being received and studied. Presentations concerning these potential projects are being developed for consideration by the Council.

The Area looks forward to establishing itself as a viable and energetic avenue for addressing resource and community concerns for our nine-county area. The Area

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*The U.S.-Mexico Border Coalition has been effective along the border areas of the State, with assistance from RC&D councils.*

anticipates having an active role in the RC&D Border Coalition and in addressing U.S.-Mexico Border Issues, within the area.



*The Rio Grande-Nueces area is rich with cultural heritage.*



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Stabilize and enhance the area's natural resources
- ★ Support improvements in infrastructure, which can improve the health and quality of life for all communities and people
- ★ Enhance the economic opportunities of the area

## Recent Projects

- ★ Kinney County EMS – Hillcrest Grant
- ★ Rocksprings Youth Organization
- ★ Brush Country Museum

The Brush Country Museum received a community grant. The museum is sponsored by the La Salle County Historical Commission. The original Museum is a one-room schoolhouse donated to the Historical Commission by the Cotulla Independent School District.



## Counties Served:

Dimmit  
Edwards  
Kinney  
La Salle  
Maverick  
Real  
Uvalde  
Val Verde  
Zavala



*A local volunteer council helping people along the Texas-Mexico border.*



*The Rio Grande-Neuces RC&D area takes in some scenic country, popular among river enthusiasts.*

For Information Contact:

## Rio Grande-Neuces RC&D Area

321 East Main Street  
Uvalde, TX 78801  
Phone (830) 279-0164  
Fax (830) 279-0198



# Sabine-Neches

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## Sabine-Neches Septic Systems

Sabine-Neches RC&D Area volunteers, in partnership with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and county units of government located in Upshur, Gregg, and Smith Counties in Texas, have been instrumental in improving the quality of life for residents in East Texas.

Using funds available through the Supplemental Environmental Projects Program (SEP), administered by TCEQ, RC&D volunteers, working with county officials, address the waste-water treatment concerns of economically disadvantaged families.

The program is funded by



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*Several large SEP projects had a positive impact on small groups and communities.*

using environmental enforcement fines for community projects.

Sabine-Neches RC&D Area volunteers worked with county officials to locate low-income families with failing septic systems who needed financial help in funding a suitable system.

To be eligible, a family must be at or below the 80 percent median

income level for families in the county they live. Eligible families receive 100 percent of the cost of the system. This unique project has allowed organizations that have been fined, to designate up to half of the fine back to the affected communities. To date, over \$300,000 has been made available for these waste water systems in the area.





# RC&D

## Goals

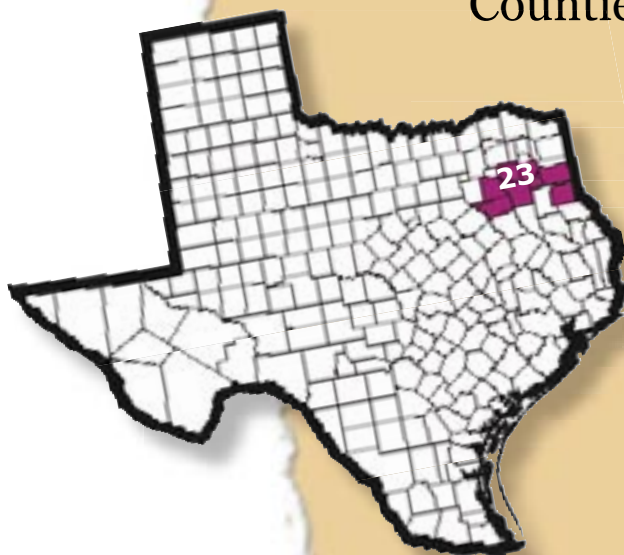
- ★ Improve water resources management
- ★ Improve the environment
- ★ Assist in community development
- ★ Improve human resources
- ★ Assist communities during disasters

## Recent Projects

- ★ Participated and Co-Sponsored the East Texas Banking and Agricultural Conference, Tyler, TX.
- ★ Co-Sponsored a "Growing Our Town" Workshop with Texas Department of Agriculture, Henderson, TX.
- ★ Continuing with the Dry Fire Hydrant and Rural Emergency Protection Program.
- ★ Received a \$2500.00 grant from Texas GLCI to host a Small Acreage Landowners Workshop to address land fragmentation and urban sprawl.



*Community workshops and local involvement are key components of the Sabine-Neches RC&D (above and left).*



## Counties Served:

Gregg  
Harrison  
Henderson  
Panola  
Smith  
Upshur  
Van Zandt  
Wood

*To utilize our diverse volunteer workforce to attain our goals.*



*Dry Fire Hydrant and Rural Emergency Protection Program.*

For Information Contact:  
**Sabine-Neches RC&D Area**  
4209 Republic Dr.  
Tyler, TX 75701  
Phone (903) 581-1318 ext.3  
Fax (903) 534-9353



# Sam Houston



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## ***Coastal Prairie Conservation Initiative***

One hundred years ago, about one million Attwater prairie chickens roamed the Texas Coastal prairie, filling the morning hours with their unique booming call. Today, only about 50 of these birds still live in the wild.

In an effort to save one of the most endangered species in North America, Texas conservationists are today working to restore the bird's habitat on private lands. In 1995, the Sam Houston RC&D Area partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts



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*Sam Houston RC&D Projects include preserving Attwater prairie chicken (above) habitat as well as community planning teams (left).*

(SWCDs) to develop management agreements for habitat restoration with a Safe Harbor component. This program administrated by Sam Houston RC&D Area, currently has 19 private landowners covering 80,112 acres enrolled in this habitat program.

When Sam Houston RC&D Area approves a private landowner for an agreement with a Safe Harbor permit, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides a baseline survey on the land to determine the number of Attwater prairie chickens present on the property. With the Safe Harbor permit the landowners is allowed to continue with normal agriculture opera-

tions including habitat restoration without jeopardy to any future bird population that may occur on the property. Once the survey is completed, the landowner develops a management plan for the property with the help of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and local SWCD's. The major work includes removing invasive brush, water distribution, and range management.

Involving private landowners made it possible to protect a once-abundant species from imminent extinction and restore its habitat so that it may once again flourish in the wild.



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Education and job training for today's job market
- ★ An economy that creates and supports dependable jobs
- ★ Adequate infrastructure in our communities
- ★ Properly managed natural resources
- ★ Improved recreational opportunities

## Recent Projects

- ★ **Rural Emergency Protection Pilot Project**  
Improving the Fire Department's ability to protect Life and Property by improving their overall efficiency, training, and utilization of equipment. This project has also helped to lower ISO Ratings resulting in Insurance savings to Taxpayers in Rural Areas.
- ★ **Cat Springs Agricultural Society Building Renovation Project**  
Assist with planning and grant searches for the historical restoration of the unique building used by the "Oldest Agriculture Society in Texas".
- ★ **City of Wharton Resource Team Assessment**  
A community based planning and assessment process consisting of interviewing a large number of people in the community, recording their suggestions and having a team of experts write up implementation plans for community use.



*Cat Springs  
Agricultural  
Society Building.*

## Counties Served:

Austin  
Brazoria  
Colorado  
Fort Bend  
Galveston  
Harris  
Matagorda  
Montgomery  
Walker  
Wharton



*Providing dynamic leadership to promote rural economic development through the sustained use of natural resources.*



*Volunteer Fire Department Hydrant Spraying project.*

For Information Contact:

**Sam Houston RC&D  
Area**

113 South Trice  
Willis, TX 77378

Phone (936) 890-4884

Fax (936) 890-4014

[shrcd@txucom.net](mailto:shrcd@txucom.net)



United States Department of Agriculture



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# Southeast Texas



*Above: Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson (L) and local leaders discuss wastewater treatment options in Smith Point.*

*Left: An Alabama Coushatta 4-H member planting Christmas trees.*

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## Communities Tackle Wastewater Issues

Local communities in the Southeast Texas RC&D area, including the communities of Cheek and Smith Point, are benefiting from wastewater treatment projects. These areas are not served by a central sewage system and all of the homes have their own onsite sewage disposal, such as septic tanks and filter fields. Over the years this method of treatment has proven ineffective.

There is a cooperative effort underway to solve these problems. The Southeast Texas RC&D, County and City governments along with the TCEQ, Drainage District

and several other local groups are actively working together to solve this problem. In the Cheek Community, one possible solution involves hookups for the homes, lift stations, and several miles of sewer line to connect the community to the existing treatment system in Beaumont. A funding application with ORCA for \$350,000 has been

approved to fund Phase 1, which will involve hooking up 78 homes and the sewer lines necessary to tie into the city of Beaumont.

In the coastal community of Smith Point, a cooperative effort is underway with the Texas General Land Office to discuss possibilities for a constructed wetland for wastewater treatment.



*Several miles of sewer lines are planned for installation to connect the Cheek community to the treatment system in Beaumont.*



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ A diversified economy that offers opportunities for growth for all residents of southeast Texas.
- ★ Rural communities that provide a healthy and safe environment for residents.
- ★ A healthy and sustainable resource base.

## Recent Projects

### ★ Seed Grant Project

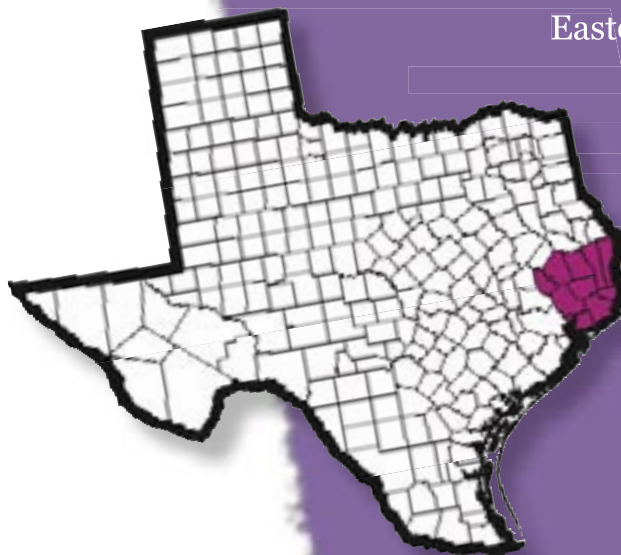
The Southeast Texas RC&D Council established a seed grant program to assist organizations with establishing new projects and ventures. One such project that's been approved is with the Alabama Coushatta Indian Reservation, with the tribe's youth 4-H club. The youth are establishing a Christmas Tree Farm on tribal lands that they will be responsible for growing, care for, harvesting and marketing the trees.

### ★ Dry hydrant programs

The Southeast Texas RC&D began a Dry Hydrant program along with the Texas Forest Service over 10 years ago. The dry hydrants provide fire departments with all weather access to water for fighting fires in rural or unincorporated areas. The technical expertise for the design and location of the hydrants has been provided by personnel from the Natural Resource Conservation Service field offices. County Commissioners and Texas Forest Service have helped make this project a success.

### ★ Cathedral of Faith Community Technology Program

The Cathedral of Faith Church in Beaumont has implemented a community-wide program that focuses on computer technology skills for all ages. The program includes evening classes to train adults in business software applications as well as internet usage. For school age students, there is an adult supervised after school program that teaches computer skills as well as grade level tutoring



## Counties Served:

Chambers

Eastern Galveston

Hardin

Jasper

Jefferson

Liberty

Newton

Orange

Polk

San Jacinto

Tyler

*To inspire local leaders to enhance the natural and economic environment and to improve their standard of living by advocating the wise use of resources.*



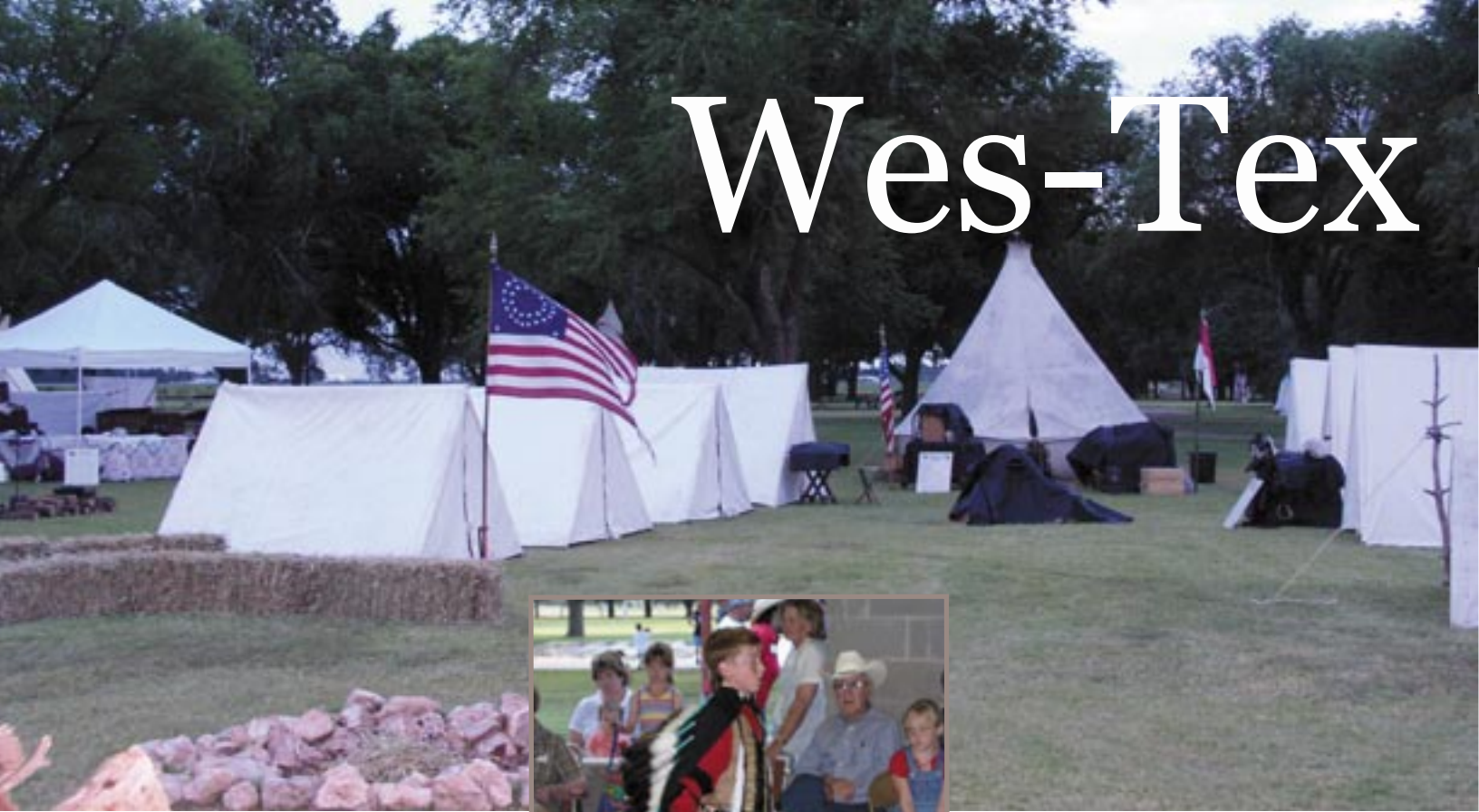
*Participants learn essential computer skills in a Cathedral of Faith Church computer technology class.*

For Information Contact:  
**Southeast Texas  
RC&D Area**

204 East Polk Street  
Livingston, TX 77351  
Phone (936) 327-6408  
Fax (936) 327-6415



# Wes-Tex



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## Last Frontier Heritage Celebration

Sgt. Otis Williams with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department provided guidance to the Cochran County Last Frontier Museum as they partnered with Wes-Tex RC&D to hold the Last Frontier Celebration, Buffalo Soldier re-enactment, held June 25-27, 2004.

The enactors came to Cochran County and set up a Buffalo Soldier camp at the County Park. Visitors to the event were able to visit with the soldiers and learn about the history of these important guardians of the early West Texas frontier.

Visitors were able to see first hand soldiers dressed in authentic uniforms, cooking and doing



chores in a realistic setting of tents and campfires. In addition to the encampment, the celebration included a parade, hamburger supper, special performances, plays, musical programs and a campfire sing-a-long.

The program was directed toward teaching about the impor-

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*The Alibates Creek Native American Indian Dance Troupe gave a special performance at the encampment celebration.*

tant role that the Buffalo Soldier played in the American frontier and military history from the Civil War through the Spanish American War. The event was so well received, plans are underway to make it an annual celebration and include even more events, such as a trail drive.



*Buffalo Soldiers at the Buffalo Soldier Hill Dedication, a ceremony that included a historical tour and presentation at the site.*



# RC&D

## Goals

- ★ Upgrade infrastructure to allow for sustained economic growth and provide for the public welfare
- ★ Increase public awareness of resource conservation and development

## Recent Projects

### ★ Livestock Scales Purchased for Mesa Youth Development Center—

The Wes-Tex RC&D Matching Grant Program provided funds toward the purchase of livestock scales for the Mesa Youth Development Center, livestock feeding center constructed and maintained by Dawson County and Lamesa ISD.

### ★ Progressive Farmer, Farm Safety Day Camp Success—

Over 200 migrant farm children from seven counties experienced a fun filled, educational day at the Farm Safety Day camp in Plainview. The children's families work in Hale, Castro, Bailey, Floyd, Lubbock, Lynn and Deaf Smith counties during the summer months and the Texas Migrant Council serves the families in an effort to assist the with child care facilities and family assistance.

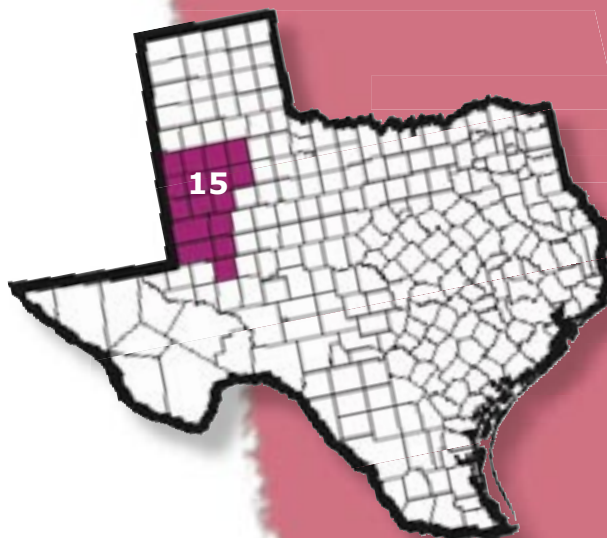
### ★ Neighborhood Missions—

This project helps improve the quality of life for members of O'Donnell, Texas community. The intent of the project is to assist low income underrepresented groups, the elderly, and the disabled improve their lives by providing them with services that they either can't physically do or financially afford.

### ★ Trio of Gardens Tour—

A Trio of Gardens project is designed to show and teach the efficiency and beauty of xeriscape landscaping. Demonstrations on composting, drip irrigation, and rain harvesting were topics presented to Midland, Texas "tourists" on this year's tour.

## Counties Served:



Andrews  
Bailey  
Cochran  
Crosby  
Dawson  
Floyd  
Gaines  
Hale  
Hockley  
Lamb  
Lubbock  
Lynn  
Martin  
Midland  
Terry  
Yoakum

*A profitable and positive  
community through partnerships.*



*A new town square flower plaza unit  
is the focal point of the downtown  
business area in Slaton, Texas.*

For Information Contact:

**Wes-Tex RC&D Area**  
**Agricultural Service Center**  
**200D West Taylor**  
**Morton, TX 79346-3054**  
**Phone (806) 266-5067**  
**Fax (806) 266-5632**



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